

Red Flags

The following behaviors may signal that you or a coworker are in danger of engaging in an inappropriate relationship (including sexual misconduct) with an offender:

- Isolation from fellow employees
- Spending too much time with one offender
- Noticeable behavioral changes (offender or staff)
- Change in appearance (offender or staff)
- Deviating from policy
- Sharing personal information
- Horseplay
- Doing favors for an offender
- Consistently volunteering for a particular assignment or shift
- Coming to work early/staying late
- Flirting with an offender
- Standing too close to an offender
- Taking up an offender's cause or grievance
- Getting into a conflict with co-workers over an offender
- Bringing unauthorized items into the facility
- Doing favors for an offender's family

How to avoid an inappropriate relationship

Most staff/offender sexual misconduct occurs after seemingly innocent professional boundaries have been crossed. The following behaviors will assist you:

- Keep a professional distance
- Focus behavior on duties and assignments
- Do not share your personal information with or around offenders
- When speaking to an offender about staff, refer to the individual as Ms., Mrs., Mr. or their title (i.e., Counselor)
- When speaking to an offender, refer to him/her as Ms., Mrs., or Mr. and their last name
- Do not accept gifts, letters, personal phone calls, or favors from any offender, their family or personal associates

Additional Resources

AS 11.41.410
AS 11.41.420
AS 11.41.425
AS 11.41.427

www.nicic.org

www.prearesourcecenter.org

The following DOC polices are available at:
<http://www.correct.state.ak.us/commissioner/policies-procedures>

- 201.09: Sexual Harassment
202.01: Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct
808.19: Sexual Abuse/Sexual Assault and Reporting

PREA

Department of Corrections

515 E. Dahlia Ave.
Ste.200, Palmer AK.
99645

Phone: (907) 761-5616

PREA Hotline: 844-761-5616



Information for
Staff, Contractors
and Volunteers

What is PREA?

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) is federal law that was signed into effect in September 2003 and prohibits sexual misconduct in correctional settings such as prisons, jails, lock-ups, juvenile facilities and Immigration Services/ICE detention facilities.

An Abuse of Power and Victimization

Due to the imbalance of power between offenders and employees in a correctional setting, sexual interaction between an employee (power) and an offender (who lacks power) is unprofessional, unethical and illegal. Some offenders may become sexually involved with staff in an effort to equalize the imbalance of power. Occasionally, an offender may try to use sex to improve his/her standing or circumstances (e.g., better job, avoid disciplinary action, gain privileges, etc.). Because of the imbalance of power between offenders and employees, contractors, and volunteers, there can never be a consensual relationship between offenders and persons working or volunteering for the Department.

Some people don't think of offenders as 'victims' of staff sexual misconduct particularly when the offender appears to be a willing participant or even the initiator of the sexual or romantic interaction with a staff member. The offender is always the victim because of the imbalance of power. The consent or willingness of an offender to participate may be a survival strategy or a learned response to a previous or current victimization.

Many offenders have a history of victimization (physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse) which may make them unusually vulnerable to the sexual overtures of persons in positions of authority.

Their perception of affection/love may be skewed by their history of abuse making it impossible for them to refuse the advances of a staff/contractor/volunteer. In some instances, particularly for female offenders, using their sexuality has been directly related to their survival in the community. Coupled with low self-esteem, this can carry over to their conduct in prison and in their interaction with staff while on community supervision.



Zero Tolerance

AKDOC has zero tolerance for all forms of sexual misconduct and will impose disciplinary sanctions for such misconduct, up to and including dismissal for staff and serious infractions for offenders who victimize other offenders. Incidents of sexual misconduct will be referred to law enforcement when applicable. DOC policies regarding sexual misconduct apply to all offenders. They also apply to employees, contract staff, volunteers and any other person providing services in Department facilities or offices.

Retaliation against any person because of his/her involvement in the reporting or investigation of a PREA claim is prohibited and will be investigated.

**THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS RECOGNIZES THAT THE
VAST MAJORITY OF EMPLOYEES DO NOT
ENGAGE IN
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT WITH OFFENDERS.**

Duty to Report

You must immediately report any knowledge, suspicion, or information received regarding an incident of sexual misconduct, including knowledge

of staff violations or neglect that may have contributed to an incident. Staff/contractors/volunteers who fail to report an allegation or incident, or who knowingly submit or coerce/threaten another to submit incomplete or untruthful information, may be subject to corrective/disciplinary action. Staff/contractors/volunteers receiving any information regarding an allegation or incident of sexual misconduct must deliver the information confidentially and immediately per the PREA Reporting Process outlined in DOC policy 808.19, Sexual Abuse/Sexual Assault and Reporting.

Things to Consider

Amorous or sexual relationships with offenders are seldom a secret. They are inappropriate and illegal. Your personal and professional reputation may be jeopardized because of inappropriate conduct with an offender. Your career, and even your family, can be negatively impacted or destroyed. Once in a relationship, professional judgment becomes clouded and the normal defenses that exist to protect you will be compromised. You will face the loss of employment and may be prosecuted resulting in a felony conviction and imprisonment. If you see warning signs, talk with the staff/contractor/volunteer. Don't let them "fall off the cliff" and then tell everyone "I could have told you that was going to happen."

Risk factors that may lead to an inappropriate relationship with an offender

- Assignment to an isolated/remote post
- A personal crisis (financial, marital, etc.)
- Little or no social life—work is the main focus
- Anger, resentment, bitterness toward, or disputes with administration